

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

John 4: 1-22

Douay Rheims Version

Christ talks with the Samaritan woman. He heals the ruler's son.

1. When Jesus therefore understood the Pharisees had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples and baptizeth more than John
2. (Though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples),
3. He left Judea and went again into Galilee.
4. And he was of necessity to pass through Samaria.
5. He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph.
6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour.

For salvation, &c. Both because I, Christ, who am the Author of salvation, am not born of the Samaritans, but of the Jews, as well as because the true knowledge and worship of God, which leads men to salvation, formerly emanated from the Jews to the Gentiles, and now in the New Law will emanate from Me, a Jew, to all nations.

Garizim, and appointed Manasses to be its priest. Thither fled many Jewish refugees, especially those who, like Manasses, had married strange wives, contrary to the Law. As an excuse they made use of the argument that Sichem was celebrated for the worship and sacrifices of the Patriarchs, as of Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 20; Josh. xxiv. 1), of the Tribes (Deut. xxvii. 12), where Moses by God's command bids Joshua to build an altar on Mount Garizim, and there offer burnt-offerings, and engrave the Decalogue on stones, and promulgate the Law of God to the Twelve Tribes, with blessings to those who kept it, the people answering "Amen."

This temple stood upon Mount Garizim for 200 years, until it was destroyed by Hyrcanus, son of Simon, the brother of Judas Maccabeus (*Jos., Ant., 1. 3, c. 17*). Josephus also relates that the Jews and Samaritans referred their controversy for settlement to Ptolemy Philometor, King of Egypt, who decided it in favour of the Jews, on the ground that the latter had built their temple at the instance of Moses. But the Samaritans were not contented with this decision, and still persisted in their schism.

Ver. 21.—*Jesus saith, &c. Ye, i.e.,* whosoever rightly, according to God's ordinance, wish to worship God the Father. The meaning is, *the hour cometh*, the time of the Evangelical Law and doctrine, about to be instituted by Me, by which, immediately after My death, which is shortly to come to pass, the Law of Moses shall be abolished, and all its rites for worshipping God in the Temple at Jerusalem, as well as in this your rival temple on Garizim. For throughout the whole world Christian churches shall be built, in which God shall be worshipped in spirit and in truth. This is what Malachi predicted under the reign of Christ (i. 10, 11).

The Hebrew for the pure or clean *oblation* is *mincha, sc.*, the Eucharist, or the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ, which alone has succeeded to all the ancient sacrifices of animals.

Ver. 22.—*Ye worship what (Arabic, whom) ye know not, &c.* Here Christ gives a direct answer to the woman, and decides the Jews to be in the right in the controversy concerning the worship of God, condemning the Samaritans as schismatics. He says, *You, O ye Samaritans, worship ye know not what*, because ye worship God together with your Assyrian idols; and associating God as it were with idols, ye worship a false or fictitious God. Again the Samaritans had their own heresies and errors, which S. Epiphanius recapitulates. In the same manner the Turks and Jews worship a God whom they know not, because they deny Him to be in a Trinity of Persons. So also Calvin with his followers, in denying the omnipotence of God, and making Him cruel in condemning some men to hell without any demerit on their part, worship not a true, but a false God. For the true God is Almighty, and most kind.

2. and better. *Ye worship, i.e.* ye have a method of worship and sacrifice which ye do not know to have proceeded from God. For ye have framed it out of your own imagination, contrary to the will and law of God. But we Jews *know what we worship*, because we follow the way of worshipping God which was prescribed by Moses.

7. There cometh a woman of Samaria, to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink.

8. For his disciples were gone into the city to buy meats.

9. Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew; ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans.

10. Jesus answered and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God and who he is that saith to thee: Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11. The woman saith to him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep. From whence then hast thou living water?

12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank thereof, himself and his children and his cattle?

13. Jesus answered and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever.

14. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.

15. The woman said to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.

16. Jesus saith to her: Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17. The woman answered and said: I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well: I have no husband.

18. For thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. This, thou hast said truly.

19. The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20. Our fathers adored on this mountain: and you say that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore.

21. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father.

22. You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know. For salvation is of the Jews.

23. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him.

24. God is a spirit: and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth.

25. The woman saith to him: I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ): therefore, when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26. Jesus saith to her: I am he, who am speaking with thee.

27. And immediately his disciples came. And they wondered that he talked with the woman. Yet no man said: What seekest thou? Or: Why talkest thou with her?

28. The woman therefore left her waterpot and went her way into the city and saith to the men there:

29. Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not he the Christ?

30. They went therefore out of the city and came unto him.

31. In the mean time, the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat.
 32. But he said to them: I have meat to eat which you know not.
 33. The disciples therefore said one to another: Hath any man brought him to eat?
 34. Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work.
 35. Do not you say: There are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries. For they are white already to harvest.
 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
 37. For in this is the saying true: That it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth.
 38. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour. Others have laboured: and you have entered into their labours.
 39. Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done.
 40. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired that he would tarry there. And he abode there two days.
 41. And many more believed in him, because of his own word.
 42. And they said to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying: for we ourselves have heard him and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.
 43. Now after two days, he departed thence and went into Galilee.
 44. For Jesus himself gave testimony that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.
 45. And when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things he had done at Jerusalem on the festival day: for they also went to the festival day.
 46. He came again therefore into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capernaum.
 47. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, sent to him and prayed him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.
 48. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not.
 49. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before that my son die.
 50. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way. Thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him and went his way.
 51. And as he was going down, his servants met him: and they brought word, saying, that his son lived.
 52. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him.
 53. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth. And himself believed, and his whole house.
 54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Vers. 1-4.— Verses are in narrative form.

Church, but better than fornication. And in his first epistle to the same he says, "The thrice married are often excommunicated for three or four years, not longer: and such unions are called polygamy, or qualified fornication. Therefore the Lord said to the Samaritan woman, who had had five husbands, *He whom thou now hast is not thy husband*, surely because those who had gone beyond a second union were not worthy the name of husband, or wife." But the Church is now of a different mind. For it is certain that fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or more marriages, are licit, although they are indecent, and marks of incontinence. And this is what S. Basil appears to have meant.

Ver. 19.—*The woman*, &c. Because Thou revealest the hidden things of my life, whether good or bad, which Thou couldest not know except by the revelation of God, especially since thou art a Jew and a foreigner, I humbly accept Thy gentle reproof, and confess my sin. "By one and the same confession," says Rupertus, "she confessed, as to herself, what *she* was, and as to Him, what she was able to perceive *He* was."

Ver. 20.—*Our fathers*, &c. The woman, acknowledging Jesus to be a prophet, now proposes a question concerning religion, which was at that time a great source of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. This she did that she might know which side she ought to take, so that she might provide for her salvation. For she was more agitated by this question than by thirst for the *living water* which Christ promised her, which she did not understand.

Worshipped: observe that by worship here and elsewhere is signified the whole public ritual of worshipping God, especially by means of sacrifices, and the other ceremonies instituted by Moses at God's mouth. This public worship could only be offered in the Tabernacle erected by Moses, and afterwards in the Temple built by Solomon. This is plain from God's law in Deut. xiv. 24. For otherwise, by natural and Divine right, it ever has been, and is lawful toworship and call upon God privately always and in every place. Thus in Gen. xxii. 5, Abraham said to his servants, "After we have worshipped, *i.e.*, sacrificed, we will come again to you."

In this mountain: Garizim, which overhangs the city of Sichem. From this mountain Jotham, the son of Gideon, cursed the Schemites, (Judges ix. 7).

There was a famous and unending controversy between the Samaritans and the Jews concerning worshipping and sacrificing in this mountain. In the time of Alexander the Great, Manasses, the brother of Jaddi, the High Priest who met Alexander, and appeased him, when he was incensed against the Jews, married a foreign wife, the daughter of Sanballat, whom Darius, the last king of Persia, had set over Samaria. Manasses, being excluded by his brother from the performance of sacerdotal functions, fled to his father-in-law, Sanballat. Sanballat built a noble temple on Mount

grace to glory, from the flesh to the spirit, from death to life eternal, from Satan to God. To believers therefore it is said, *Sursum corda*. And this is a sure sign of the indwelling of grace and the Holy Ghost, if our minds are occupied in heaven, if we speak and do heavenly things, if we say, with S. Paul, “Our conversation is in heaven.” For this cause Christ came down from heaven, that He might make us to rise from earth to heaven, according to the words, “Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (Cant. ii. 8).

The woman saith, &c. “She was delighted,” says S. Austin, “not to thirst, and thought that this promise was made unto her by the Lord in a fleshly sense. Her poverty drove her to the labour of coming and drawing water from a well at a distance from the town; and her weakness shrank from this toil. The woman, who was carnal and ignorant, did not yet understand that Christ was speaking of the spiritual water of grace. Then He smote her with another dart, that she might have loftier thoughts concerning Him.”

Therefore Jesus saith unto her, *Go call thy husband*. Observe from S. Chrysostom and others that Christ bade the woman call her husband with this pretext, that it would not be proper to give this so great a gift of *living water* to a married woman without the knowledge of her husband. But Christ really intended to open out to her the hidden things of her life, and her secret fornication, that so He might draw her confession from her, and arouse her to repentance. At the same time He would show her that He was more than a mere man, that He was the Christ, from whom she might ask and expect remission of her sins and everlasting salvation.

For this was the *living water* which Christ set forth.

Ver. 17.—*The woman answered*, &c. From hence it is plain that this woman was thus a widow, and therefore not an adulteress, but a harlot, unless indeed her lover were married, in which case both were guilty of adultery.

Ver. 18.—For thou hast had, &c. Nonnus says, For thou hast had five husbands, one after another; and he whom thou now hast is not thy lawful husband. So S. Austin, Bede, Euthymius, and others passim. But S. Chrysostom and Maldonatus think they were unlawful, adulterous connections, and that they are here spoken of by Christ in this sense, that she was now living with a sixth adulterer. But the former sense is the more probable, because Christ makes an antithesis between the five former, which were lawful connections, and this sixth, which was unlawful.

Observe here the gentle and courteous method of Christ’s reproof. He does not say directly to the woman, “Thou art an adulteress, or a fornicatrix—do penance for thy fornications.” But He praises her for speaking the truth in saying, *she had no husband*. Then He adds, *He whom thou now hast is not thy husband*, tacitly implying that she was living in sin with him, and that He knew of this secret sin by the revelation of God, and therefore that He was a prophet, from whom she ought to ask pardon and grace.

S. Basil (*Epist. 2. ad Amphilocho*.) says that a third marriage is an abomination to the

When therefore Jesus knew, &c. . . . *than John*, that is, than John *had* made and baptized, says S. Augustine (lib. 2, *de cons. Evang.*, c. 18), for John was now in prison. For these things had happened through the occasion of John’s imprisonment. For Jesus, knowing of John’s imprisonment, and fearing the envy and calumny of the Pharisees, who had already stirred up Herod against John, that they might not be the means of casting Himself also into prison through the instrumentality of Herod or Pilate, and put him to death before the time predetermined by the Father, prudently retired out of Judea into Galilee. See what has been said about this on Matt iv. 12.

Although Jesus, &c. Both because Jesus was occupied in the greater works of preaching and Healing the sick; as Paul saith, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel” (1 Cor. i. 17), also that He might show that the efficacy of His baptism was greater than that of John’s. See what has been said on iii. 32.

He left Judea, &c. Not as though He feared death, but that He might mollify the envy of the Pharisees, says S. Chrysostom. For the Pharisees were very influential. For most of the priests, senators, and magistrates belonged to their sect. This was the second occasion of Christ retiring into Galilee, the first being in chap. 1. 43.

He must needs, &c. For Samaria lies betwixt Judea and Galilee. Cyril observes that Christ does not here go counter to his own command, by which He enjoined on His apostles not to go into the cities of the Samaritans (S. Matt. x. 5). For He there forbids them not to go to the Samaritans of set purpose, nor to continuously evangelise them, lest they should prejudice the Jews, who were their enemies, against themselves and the faith of Christ. Jesus on this occasion was only passing through Samaria on His way to Galilee.

Samaria was the district which was occupied by the tribe of Ephraim, and half the tribe of Manasseh. It took its name of Samaria from the royal city, which was built upon the hill *Somer*. See 1 Kings xvi. 24.

Ver. 5.—*He came therefore*, &c. *Sichar*, i.e., *Sichem*. When Jeroboam revolted from Rehoboam, and usurped the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, he made this city his capital. The capital was afterwards transferred by Omri to Samaria. Afterwards, in the time of Alexander the Great, Sichem was again made the capital of the region of Samaria, as Josephus testifies (*Ant.*, ii. 8), and was called Neapolis. In the time of our Saviour *Sichem* was corrupted into *Sichar*. It is now called *Naplous*. This city was the site of many famous deeds mentioned in Scripture. Abraham journeying from Mesopotamia into Canaan, came first to Sichem, and built an altar to the Lord, and received the promise of that land. See Gen. xii. and xiii.

Jacob also returning from Mesopotamia fixed his tent here, and bought a piece of ground from the sons of Emmor (Gen. xxxiii.). Here Dinah, his daughter, was corrupted by the son of the King of Sichem (Gen. xxxiv.). Sichem was appointed one of the cities of refuge (Josh. xx.) Here the ten tribes revolted from Judea through the folly of Rehoboam. The bones of Joseph were buried at Sichem, as is related at the end of the Book of Joshua. S. Jerome (*tract. de loc. Hebr.*) says that Salem and Sichem were the same. Hence it follows that Melchisedec, the type of Christ, was also king of this city.

Near the parcel of ground, &c. See what I have said on Gen. xlviii. 22. Wherefore Joseph when he was dying in Egypt commanded his bones to be translated to Sichem, as to his own piece of land, which had been left him by the will of his father.

Ver. 6.—*Jacob's fountain* (Vulg.) This *fountain* was a well dug by Jacob, as appears from ver. 12. This is the meaning of the Hebrew *beer*. So S. Augustine says, giving the meaning of *fons* in Latin, “Every well is a fountain, but not every fountain a well. Where water springs out of the earth, and affords drink, it is called a *fountain*. If it is on the surface it is called a *fountain* only: but if: it be deep, it is called a well, and loses the name of fountain.” Varro derives the word *fons* from *fundo*, to pour. A fountain, he says, is where living water is poured out of the earth. *Jacob's fount* therefore was a well which Jacob had dug in this place for the use of himself and his family. Or he may have bought it of the Shechemites, as Ruperti thinks.

Jesus therefore being wearied; for He went about among the towns and villages on foot, even till His death. His apostles followed His example. Blessed Xavier and his followers lately did the same in India. Piously does S. Augustine say (*Tract.* 15), “Not in vain is Jesus wearied; not in vain is the power of God fatigued: for not vainly is He wearied by whom the weary are refreshed. Not in vain is He wearied, when if He forsake us, we are weary, but if He be present with us, we are strong. For though Jesus was wearied with His journey, yet it was the strength of Christ which has created thee. The strength of Christ made thee, that that which was not might be: the weakness of Christ caused that that which was should not perish. He formed us by His strength: He sought us by His weakness. Therefore He Himself cherishes the weak, as a hen her chickens, for to her He compared Himself.”

Upon the fount: Greek, ἐπί τῆ πηγῆ, *at the fount, or near the well*. Or strictly, *above the fount*, because the bubbling water was deep down in the well.

Sat thus: where He conveniently could. He sat upon the ground without a seat, as wayfarers are wont to sit down besides wells and fountains, for the sake of rest and refreshment. So S. Chrysostom and Euthymius. Or more simply, *He sat thus*, means, as being tired with His journey. He sat as men are wont to sit when they are tired, showing by so doing that they are weary. So Cajetan and others

3. *Sat thus* may mean, *in this way, i.e.*, under the circumstances which I will now pass under review. He sat *thus, i.e.*, when it was *the sixth hour*, and the woman came to draw water, and the disciples had gone away to buy food.

Observe, that the Holy Spirit by His grace begins to fulfil in this life all the thirst and desire of the soul, but in heaven He does this perfectly. Also He extinguishes the thirst of pride and concupiscence. Lastly, in heaven He altogether takes away all the hunger and thirst of the soul, every defect and trouble, through the glory and endowment of impassibility, according to the words, “I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear” (Ps. xvii. 15): also, “They shall not hunger nor thirst any more; neither shall the heat, nor the sun smite them” (Isa. xlix. 10). As the Gloss says, “He promises the fullness of the Spirit, which shall be in the resurrection, because with Him is the fountain of life with which they shall be inebriated. Heavenly glory therefore makes up all defects both of soul and body, all desires, and all thirst. “For beatitude is a perfect state through the aggregation of all goods,” says Boethius, according as it is said, “Thou shalt give them drink out of the torrent of Thy pleasure (Ps. xxxvi. 9).

Ver. 14.—*But the water, &c. . . waters leaping up* (Syriac).

1. The allusion is to those fountains which flow with such an impetus, the water behind pressing on that which is before, that although they be brought down into the valleys, yet by means of pipes they ascend to the level of the original spring. Thus the grace of the Holy Spirit draws the soul to its source, which is God and heaven. For grace is the seed of glory. The Arabic translates, *The water which I will give, shall be in him water which shall bring a flood of eternal life*. Grace then propels, as it were, a man to heaven, and never rests until it carries him where there is no thirst, nor defect, nor misery, but where all is abundance, and all is happiness. For this is the meaning of *everlasting life*. For this fountain of grace which is in the soul is derived from its original Spring, which is the Holy Ghost in heaven, even like a fountain which, being artificially conducted, bursts forth in a square, or garden, but is derived from its original spring in some mountain.

2. *It shall be in him a fount*, because, as Theophylact says, the water of grace which Christ instils into the faithful soul is being ever multiplied in it. For the saints receive the seeds and beginning of good through grace, but they themselves “trade” with it, and work for its increase, that, as it were a fountain, it may abound in them, and afford abundant drink, not only to themselves, but to many others. As S. Chrysostom says, “He that hath a fountain in himself is not troubled with thirst.” And Origen, “Every one of the angels hath in him a fount of water welling up unto life eternal from the Word Himself.”

3. *A fountain*, the more it flows downward, the more water there flows into it from above. So too the more any one pours his own grace upon others, the more God clauses to flow into him.

Lastly, this is a paradox spoken by Christ, that whereas earthly water flows downwards, this His fountain flows upwards, according to the saying, *The founts of the holy rivers are borne upwards*. Here is a great and marvellous leap, the mighty and infinite power of the Holy Ghost, which makes the earthy and laden hearts of men to leap from earth to highest heaven, from

or to find better water than this, Thou must needs be greater than the Patriarch Jacob, our father." So S. Chrysostom. By degrees did Jesus raise the woman's mind, so that she should at length acknowledge Him to be the Messiah. For from what He had said, *If thou knewest who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water*, the woman conjectured, or suspected, that Jesus was making Himself to be greater than Jacob.

Ver. 13.—*Jesus answered*, &c. Jesus modestly points out to this woman, who was extolling the water of her own well, that His *living water* must be far better, because it would quench all, even future thirst. From this He tacitly left it to be gathered that He was superior to Jacob. As S. Chrysostom says, "He did not say that He was greater, because He would have seemed to be boasting of Himself, not yet being known; but this meaning lay hid under His words. For He said not simply, *I will give thee water*; but taking no notice of Jacob's water, He praises His own, wishing to show its difference from the (different) nature of the givers of the gifts, and how greatly He excelled the Patriarch." S. Cyril adds, "He showed that sensible and earthly water was infinitely inferior to that which He would have her understand" (that He would give her).

Whoso drinketh, &c. Tropologically, S. Augustine: "The water in the well," he says, "is the pleasure of the world in a dark abyss, which men draw with the pitcher of desire. For this makes men always to thirst, because cupidity is insatiable."

But whose shall drink, &c. Meaning, He that shall receive from Me *living water*, that is, the grace of the Holy Spirit, shall no more thirst for justice, the friendship of God, virtue, or holiness, because he shall already have them through grace. We must understand, unless he should wilfully squander and lose this *water of grace* by deadly sin. This is Christ's antithesis: Common water, O woman, such as thine out of this well, when drunk, only quenches thirst for a brief space, because it does not remain in the body. But this water of Mine, which is the grace of the Holy Spirit, is in itself of such efficacy, that if it be even once tasted, it will suffice to banish thirst for ever. For it will always abide in the soul, the same and immutable. For the habitual grace of the ordinary Law of God, brings with itself at set times prevenient helps, that is to say, the impulses of exciting grace, which, as they are needful, so also they suffice, for retaining the spiritual vigour of the soul, and also its perseverance unto salvation. This is the teaching of the Council of Trent (Sess. 6, c. 16).

You will ask, Why then is it said in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, "They that drink me shall yet be thirsty?" For this would seem to be contrary to what Christ here says of His grace, *He shall nor thirst for ever*. I answer that the meaning of "they that drink me shall yet be thirsty," is, they shall desire to be still more filled with that wisdom of God which they already possess. They will wish for an increase of the wisdom and grace of God. Thus S. Ignatius the martyr, when, being condemned to the lions, he came into the amphitheatre of Rome, said, looking round at the spectators, "I am come hither to die for my Jesus, for whom I thirst unquenchably, that I may be united to Him in heaven."

Sixth hour. He gives the reason why Jesus sat at the fountain; because He was wearied, hungry, and thirsty. It was the sixth hour, or mid-day, when the heat is greatest. Nonnus renders, *It was the hour bringing thirst*.

A woman of Samaria: of the district, not the city of Samaria. She came from the city of Sichar, which was near the well.

Jesus saith to her. Jesus took the initiative in conversing with her. For He knew that the woman, being a Samaritan, would not do so, but would dislike Him as being a Jew. But "He who desired to drink thirsted for the faith of the woman," says S. Augustine. Observe the wonderful affability and charity of Christ in seeking to enter into conversation with a wretched harlot, that He might convert her, and through her a whole city.

Ver. 8.—*For His disciples*, &c. The word *for* gives the reason why Jesus asked drink of the woman; because His disciples, from whom otherwise He would have sought food and drink, had gone into the city to buy food. For Jesus wished to drink beside the well, and to drink from it, just as poor travellers are wont to do, especially in Syria and Arabia, and other hot countries where there is a scarcity of water. This happened by Christ's tacit providence, that His disciples being all gone away into the city, He might by Himself be able more easily, in talking with this immodest woman, to spare her shame, and disclose her immodesty, and so convert her to faith and modesty.

Ver. 9.—*The woman therefore saith*, &c. *Therefore* in Greek and Hebrew often merely marks the beginning of a sentence. Here, however, it denotes an inference from the preceding question of Christ.

Jesus had asked the woman for water; the woman *therefore* replied to His question, *How is it*, &c. The woman recognised Jesus to be a Jew from His dress and speech, which Christ, out of good feeling to His country, accommodated to that of his fellow-countrymen.

For the Jews, &c., *i.e.*, have no intercourse, do not use the same bed, or cup, or vessel, as though they were impure and abominable on account of their schism. These words may be either those of the Evangelist, or of the Samaritan woman. In either case they are very appropriate. Learn from this example how we ought to shun the friendship, looks, and conversation of heretics; for "their speech doth eat as doth a cancer," saith S. Paul.

Ver. 10.—*Jesus answered*, &c. *If thou knewest the gift of God*. This gift is (1.) *common*, what God has given to every man, "if thou knowest that I am Christ, the Saviour of the world." 2. *Especial to thyself*, what God now manifests to thee through Me, that through My conversation thou mayest have an opportunity of salvation, that thou mayest believe in Me, and so be justified and saved. So Maldonatus.

Thou perchance wouldst have asked, Greek, σὺ ἂν ἤτησας αὐτὸν, i.e., thou surely wouldst have asked. For ἂν here is an expletive and confirmatory particle. The Vulgate, however, has forsitan, perchance, to denote the free will of the asker.

And He would have given, &c. Christ leads her from earthly water to spiritual water. Let religious and apostolical men do likewise. Observe, as a stagnant lake, or pool, is termed dead, because it moves not; so, on the contrary, flowing water is called living water, especially that which leaps forth, as it were, from fountains, as though animated by a living spirit.

Moreover, Christ's evangelical doctrine is here called *living water*: so are the Holy Ghost and His grace. So S. Cyril, and other authors *passim*. It is called *water*:

1. Because, like water, it cleanses the soul from sin. Indeed, it gives the soul new beauty and adornment, which water does not do: according to the words, "Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Again, though water washes, it likewise weakens and destroys. For we see that clothes which are washed, are cleansed indeed, but are worn away. But it is not thus with the Holy Ghost, for He cleanses the soul, and at the same time gives it greater strength. And the more the soul is washed the stronger it becomes.
2. Because the Holy Ghost and His grace cool the heat of concupiscence, and all the other passions of the soul.
3. Because it quenches spiritual thirst.
4. Because as water fertilizes the earth, trees, and plants, so does grace render the soul fruitful in good works and all virtues. But grace does a greater work than water: for it elevates the soul, so that it not only produces natural good fruit, but the supernatural fruit of faith, hope, and charity, according to the words, "He that abideth in Me, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Again, water from a pear-tree produces pears, from a rose-bush roses. But grace brings forth in one and the same soul the fruits of all virtues, and that in a soul which before was so polluted by sin that it produced nothing but the evil fruits of wickedness.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit and His grace are called *living water*.

1. Because the Holy Ghost liveth in Himself with the fullness of His Divinity a blessed and Divine life, and imparts this His own life to the believing soul. Indeed, the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son, is uncreated and essential Life Itself, from which the natural and supernatural life of all angels, men, animals, and plants flows as from a fountain, yea, an ocean.
2. Because the grace of the Holy Spirit is the *form* by which life is lived according to the Spirit. Therefore grace is, as it were, the soul of the soul; the soul, I say, of virtue and holiness.
3. Because by His grace the Holy Ghost, who is Life Itself, dwells within us, and quickens us.
4. Because He effects that the soul shall be continually renewed unto what is good, ever arranging new steps in the heart, by which it mounts to better and higher things, according to the words in the 84th Psalm, ver. 6, "He hath disposed ascensions in His

heart." (Vulg.) For as S. Ambrose says, "The grace of the Holy Spirit knows not tardy efforts, but constrains the soul to ascend with the Blessed Virgin the hills of virtues."

5. S. Augustine says, *Living water* is so called, because it flows in such a manner that it is united with its fount or source. What is called *dead water* is that which is cut off from its source. Grace therefore is called *living water* because it is never separated from its fount, which is the Holy Ghost. Just as the Holy Ghost Himself is inseparable from His source, which is the Father and the Son, and ever liveth most closely united with them in the Divine Essence. Wherefore although the Holy Ghost pours Himself into the soul, yet He departeth not from the Father and the Son; yea, He causes the Father and the Son to enter into the soul together with Himself, that they all may dwell therein, as in their temple, according to the words (John xiv. 23), "If any man loveth Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him: and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." So S. Cyril (*lib. 2, c. 22*), "He calls the grace of the Spirit *living*, because it is *life-giving*; and because it is united to its source, and makes us to be united." For grace always depends upon the Holy Spirit, and by it the Spirit dwells in us, and is united with us, and by it we are united to Him, according to the words, *Your members are the temple of the holy Ghost* (1 Cor. vi.)

6. The water of a fountain being brought down into the valleys by means of pipes, can again from them, by the continuous rush of the water from the fount, be drawn to as great a height as its original source. This is proved by constant experience. In like manner heavenly grace, like a fountain of gifts and virtues, flowing down from the Holy Ghost out of heaven, makes us to leap back as it were thither as high as its source, even to God and heaven. *The water which I shall give him shall be in him a fount of water leading up into eternal life* (John v. 14, Vulg.)

Ver. 11.—*The woman, &c.* The Greek is, *Thou hast not ἀντήμα, a pitcher, or waterpot.* Observe, the *fountain* is here called a *well*, and is said to be *deep*. Rupertus writes that its depth was forty cubits.

Ver. 12.—*Art Thou greater, &c.* Observe, the Samaritans were Assyrians whom Salmanasar had brought into Samaria instead of the original inhabitants, the ten tribes of Israel, whom he carried away into Assyria. These Assyrians, however, wished, when the Jewish state was in a flourishing condition, to be accounted Jews (*Jos., Ant., lib. 11, cap. ult.*), both because they dwelt in the portion of the Holy Land which had been allotted to the tribe of Ephraim, and because they were commingled with the Israelites who had been left in the country. Another reason was because they partly followed the Jewish religion. For they worshipped the God of Israel, together with the Assyrian idols (2 Kings xvii.) This then was why the woman called Jacob *our father*, as though the Samaritans were Israelites, and descended from him. The meaning then is, "Jacob had no better water than this, for if he had had, he surely would have drank of it, both himself, and his children. If thou, therefore, O Jesus, art able to give,